

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 0566

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CB

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER ON JAN 9

1. IN COURSE OF JAN 9 MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER, WE
DISCUSSED FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

A. NEED TO FILL UP FANK INTERVENTION BRIGADES.

I STRESSED NEED TO REPLACE LOSSES INCURRED BY FANK INTERVENTION
BRIGADES IF FANK IS TO BE PREPARED FOR SECOND ROUND OF
FIGHTING IN CURRENT DRY SEASON. IN THIS CONNECTION I
RECALLED MY TRIPS INTO PROVINCES LAST NOVEMBER WHEN I
URGED REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDERS TO RECRUIT ACTIVELY TO
BRING INTERVENTION BRIGADES UP TO AUTHORIZED STRENGTH
QUICKLY. FACT THAT THIS HAD NOT BEEN FULLY ACHIEVED MAY
COME HOME TO HAUNT FANK IN CURRENT ROUND OF FIGHTING.
LONG BORET SAID THAT CABINET HAD FOCUSED ON THIS
PROBLEM JAN 8 AND HAD TAKEN FOLLOWING TWO DECISIONS:

A) DEFERMENT POLICY WOULD BE REVIEWED. THIS WILL
PERMIT DRAFT BOARDS TO MOBILIZE GREATER NUMBER OF
DRAFTEES IN PHNOM PENH AREA; B) CINC/FANK HAS BEEN
GIVEN AUTHORITY TO INCORPORATE SOME ELEMENTS OF PHNOM
PENH AUTO DEFENSE FORCES INTO INTERVENTION UNITS TO
REPLACE LATTER'S LOSSES. TWENTY THOUSAND MEN ARE
PRESENTLY IN AUTO DEFENSE FORCES IN CAPITAL AREA AND
GENERAL SOSTHENE WILL HAVE POWER TO DECIDE HOW MANY AUTO
DEFENSE MEMBERS ARE TO BE TRANSFERRED INTO INTERVENTION
BRIGADES AND INTO WHICH PRECISE UNITS. PRIME MINISTER
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FULLY AGREED ON CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF INCREASING FANK'S FOXHOLE STRENGTH IF PHNOM PENH IS TO WITHSTAND NEXT ENEMY THRUST.

B. DEPARTURE OF MINISTER OF INTERIOR EK PROEUNG. LONG BORET CONFIRMED INFO SET FORTH PHNOM PENH 543, I.E. THAT EK PROEUNG AND WIFE DEPARTED FOR PARIS JAN 5, WHERE HE WILL REMAIN UNTIL NEW CABINET HAS BEEN FORMED IN PHNOM PENH. THIS MEANS EK PROEUNG WOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN NEXT GOVERNMENT. IN ORDER TO PREVENT RECURRENCE OF CORRUPT PRACTICES IN CONNECTION WITH ISSUANCE OF EXIT PERMITS FOR KHMERS WISHING TO LEAVE COUNTRY, PRIME MINISTER WILL PROPOSE LEVYING OF A STIFF FEE ON EACH VISA; THE PROCEEDS WILL THEN BE MADE AVAILABLE TO WAR VICTIMS AND REFUGEES. IN THIS WAY, MONEY COLLECTED FOR EXIT PERMITS WILL BENEFIT NATIONAL COMMUNITY, RATHER THAN BE SIPHONED OFF INTO POCKETS OF INDIVIDUAL OFFICIALS.

C. FORMATION OF NEXT CABINET. PRIME MINISTER APOLOGIZED THAT COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE HAD DELAYED CABINET RESHUFFLE. HE PLANS TO KEEP INTERIOR PORTFOLIO FOR HIMSELF; THIS WILL GIVE HIM CHANCE TO SUPERVISE PERSONALLY THIS MINISTRY AND ALSO STRENGTHEN OWN HAND POLITICALLY. HE ASKED ME TO SUPPORT THIS FORMULA WITH THE MARSHAL, SINCE IN THE PAST LON NOL HAD ALWAYS PLACED HIS OWN MAN IN THIS KEY POSITION. I AGREED TO RAISE THIS MATTER WITH THE MARSHAL NEXT WEEK, ONCE PRIME MINISTER HAD COMPLETED DRAWING UP HIS PROGRAM AND HAD DECIDED ON COMPOSITION OF CABINET. HE ALSO PLANS TO GIVE UNG MUNG, ONE OF SOSTHENE'S CRONIES, A MINOR PORTFOLIO IN ORDER TO CEMENT HIS WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH CINC/FANK.

D. AUSTERITY MEASURES IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. PRIME MINISTER PLANS TO REDUCE OVERALL GKR PERSONNEL OVERSEAS BY 10 PERCENT. CERTAIN MISSIONS, SUCH AS NEW DELHI, MOSCOW, RANGOON AND WARSAW, WILL BE MANNED BY ONE OFFICIAL. REST OF PERSONNEL AT THESE POSTS WILL BE CALLED BACK TO PHNOM PENH. ALSO, TRAVEL TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES WILL BE DRASTICALLY REDUCED IN NUMBER TO BE ATTENDED AND SIZE OF KHMER DELEGATION. FINALLY, LONG BORET ASKED OUR HELP TO REDUCE MILITARY STAFFS AT KHMER CONFIDENTIAL

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EMBASSIES. HE CLAIMED MARSHAL HAS AUGMENTED THESE STAFFS AND FILLED THEM WITH HIS OWN MEN. I AGREED THAT FANK OFFICERS ARE NEEDED MORE IN-COUNTRY THAN ABROAD AND WOULD PASS ON THESE VIEWS TO FANK LEADERS.

E. NEW GOVERNOR FOR NATIONAL BANK. LONG BORET FAILED TO CONVINCE PRESENT GOVERNOR NATIONAL BANK TO

STAY ON AND ASKED WHETHER I HAD ANY CANDIDATES TO FILL POSITION. I INQUIRED IF SENG BUN KORN, PRESENT HEAD OF INADANA JATI BANK, WOULD MAKE A GOOD GOVERNOR. LONG BORET AGREED THAT SENG BUN KORN IS HIGHLY QUALIFIED, BUT HE JUST DISCOVERED THAT KORN WAS INVOLVED IN AN ILLEGAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE TRANSACTION AND THEREFORE COULD NOT BE MADE HEAD NATIONAL BANK.

F. ESTABLISHMENT OF A SEPARATE MINISTRY TO FIGHT CORRUPTION. LONG BORET WOULD LIKE TO NAME FORMER PRIME MINISTER YEM SAN BAUR TO THIS POSITION. WHILE SEM SAN BAUR WAS NOT A PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE MINISTER IN THE PAST, HE IS CONSIDERED RELATIVELY HONEST AND HOPEFULLY

HE COULD BRING THIS SCOURGE UNDER CONTROL. LON NOL DOES NOT LIKE THE IDEA OF CREATING SUCH A MINISTRY, LONG BORET SAID, AND HE AGAIN SOLICITED MY INTERVENTION WITH MARSHAL IN CASE THIS IS NEEDED.

2. PRIME MINISTER HOPES TO PUT FINISHING TOUCHES TO COMPOSITION OF CABINET AND PROGRAM IN NEXT FEW DAYS AND WILL SHOW IT TO ME BEFORE TAKING IT TO THE MARSHAL IN THE HOPE THAT I CAN SUPPORT HIM WITH LATTER IN EVENT PRIME MINISTER RUNS INTO DIFFICULTIES WITH HEAD OF STATE.

3. COMMENT. DURING THE LAST WEEK LONG BORET HAS VISITED SEVERAL TIME FRONT LINES AND REFUGEE CAMPS, EVEN GOING TO THE MOST EXPOSED SITES. HIS COOL PERFORMANCE UNDER DIFFICULT CONDITIONS HAS CERTAINLY ENHANCED HIS STATURE HERE.
DEAN

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